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MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM THARP BUCHANAN.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM THARP BUCHANAN, Esq.

OF ILFRACOMBE.

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM SHEPHERD, Esq.

OF ILFRACOMBE, DEVON.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THE following pages, which were intended for the press by the amiable and much lamented author, and which, owing to his repeated attacks of severe indisposition, he was prevented from publishing when living, are now printed with the design, not only of carrying in some measure into effect his intention, but also of preserving for the mournful satisfaction of his numerous and attached friends, some memorial both of his literary abilities and christian zeal.

This desirable end the Editor conceives will be accomplished in the present work, which, he is persuaded, is calculated to produce a salutary influence on the mind of the reader; and will, he trusts, be a means of advancing the spiritual welfare of many.

J. G.

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MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH—EDUCATION—INFIDEL PRINCIPLES—MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT.

WILLIAM THARP BUCHANAN, the subject of the following Memoir, was the eldest son of —— BUCHANAN, Esq. late of Ilfracombe. He was a young man of considerable natural talents, and acquirements in literature: he possessed a mind that sought to grasp a subject in all its bearings, and, wherever he could, to trace the essential connexion between cause and effect. To this was added a principle of resistance, somewhat too strong, when he met with opposition, and a quickness of feeling, bordering on asperity, which rendered his character at times unamiable, till it

was softened and subdued by Divine grace. Hence many disappointments, as he grew up, and trials repugnant to his temper, produced in him a tendency to misanthropy, not often met with in young persons: this, combined with an ardent love of natural scenery, increased the fondness for rural retirement, and even solitude, in which he delighted, and frequently indulged.

He was educated for a military life; but taking a disgust at some occurrences not necessary to mention, he suddenly abandoned all idea of entering the army, and almost as suddenly turned his thoughts towards the church, with the intention of ministering at its altars. Nor need this excite surprise; for his love of the Creator's works excited in him that natural love and admiration of the Creator, which is not utterly extinguished by the fall, in the human breast. He felt with exquisite sensibility the force of the following lines:—

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods;
There is a rapture by the lonely shore;
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
For these our interviews."

Yet let it not hence be supposed that he was at all acquainted with the religion of the gospel; for there are many minds which can glow with admiration of the Deity in his works, and at the same time reject him in his beloved Son. Characters such as these must always more or less interest us, and make us desirous to bring them to a knowledge of Him, "whom to know is eternal life, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent."

Whatever satisfaction and peace of mind they possess, it is necessarily connected with ignorance of themselves, as fallen and ruined sinners, and of God, as a punisher of every violator of his law. This will be amply illustrated in the sequel of this narrative.

Preparatory to entering one of the English Universities, Mr. Buchanan applied to his studies with an ardour seldom equalled, and with a success that showed the powers of his mind. But his constitution, though naturally a good one, could not bear all that was imposed upon it; and he was obliged reluctantly, through ill health, to relinquish, at least for a season, the labours in which he had been so deeply occupied. Theology now began to occupy his mind;

and because he found in the sacred writings "some things hard to be understood," he was unfortunately led to reject the whole of the inspired volume; he knew not the important truth, that our faith is not "to stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God:" nor that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. He therefore fell into the too common error of sitting in judgment on the revealed truth of God, without first consulting the evidences by which it may be established; and, having previously fallen in with some infidel authors, his mind was prepared already to object and cavil; this induced him to abandon all idea of the clerical profession with disgust, and to fortify more strongly his mind in its dangerous errors by the writings of the most popular deists of the day. So great, indeed, at this time, was his hatred of the Bible, that, if in the course of his reading, any passage from it was brought before him, he passed it over with expressions of contempt. But, notwithstanding all the arguments he could bring against the truth, a latent

conviction of its reality remained in him; and he was far from obtaining that ease and comfort from his new principles which he expected.

In this condition, he withdrew into almost total solitude in the country, where he amused himself with rural scenery, and sought to trace the hand of the great Creator in his visible works, and to establish himself more firmly in the vain notions he had embraced. His health now began to amend; but gloom and inquietude pervaded his mind, which in his lonely retreat brooded over his disappointments, and proved how vain was the stoicism of which he made his boast. It will indeed always be found, that however specious in theory may be the speculations of the human intellect, when opposed to the word of God, in the hour of danger and distress they can bring no solid peace, and are only "refuges of lies," in which whosoever trusts must be disappointed.

> "Periods there are in human life,
> When reason's boasted sway
> Avails not to allay the strife
> That marks our stormy way,—
> Alike unable to provide,
> To rule, to obviate, or guide."

He had imbibed the idea, long ago exploded by revelation, that the Supreme Being, having made the world, and placed it under certain laws, left his creatures to a kind of chance or fate, considering them as thenceforth unworthy of his care.

This false humility of infidelity, instead of exalting the Deity, robs him of his most distinguishing perfections, and supposes his attributes to be but finite; and it has its source in the blinded understanding and unbelieving heart of man, and is aptly described by the Psalmist:—"Thou thoughtest that I was such an one as thyself." God declares by the prophet, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," Isa. lv. 8, 9.

Thus rejecting the idea of a superintending Providence, he knew how painful was the feeling arising from considering the world as left to the uncertainties of chance, and the immitigable miseries of endless confusion; and thought the distress and sorrow which pervaded the whole

earth could not but be a matter of indifference to the Maker of all. His notions of the dignity of man were grounded on his moral excellence, and the acquirements of a good education, in which considering himself not deficient, he was too apt to regard those who came not up to his own standard as an inferior order of beings. Religion he held to be fanaticism, or the baseless fabric of visionary tales preached by enthusiasts; he admitted that they might be very honest in their intentions, but they were certainly deceived by the Scriptures, from which they took their creed. View him, therefore, holding these opinions, and, connecting them with the natural cast of his mind, it will not be difficult to conceive what was the complexion of his musings in his voluntary seclusion from society. In this seclusion he continued six months, about which time he had begun to form schemes for his future guidance, which happily were never permitted to be realized. It was soon seen that "the way of man is not in himself;" that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," Jer. x. 23; and that the Lord oftentimes "leads the blind by a way that they know not;" and that, though there be

many devices in a man's heart, the counsel of the Lord alone shall stand. It was at this period, in the month of February, 1822, that he met with an accident, which had a material influence upon his future course. While taking a solitary ramble among some of the wildest and most picturesque scenery in the neighbourhood, he suddenly found himself in a perilous situation: he had descended part of a rugged declivity near the sea shore, and discovered to his alarm that to return was impossible, and to proceed highly dangerous, as the precipice beneath him was nearly perpendicular; but it was necessary to proceed, and in doing so, he fell with great force on some rocks beneath. The shock, indeed, was so violent, that it materially injured his frame, and produced a concussion of the spine. This was the commencement of severe suffering, which lasted three years and a half, and then terminated in death.

He remained a fortnight in the country after this accident; and, finding his complaints daily assuming a more formidable aspect, he was removed to the neighbouring town of Ilfracombe. Now was the time for his philosophy to support

him, and with great firmness he determined to bear his misfortune, and for a long time he rested on his false principles for consolation. But of what use was his philosophy to him in the day of adversity? Its influence on his mind resembled that of a cold, gloomy November day on the body: his heart was more chilled, wretched, and comfortless than before; he could well apply to himself the following passage from the page of the Scriptures he despised:—"Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit," Eccl. ii. 17. "Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive," Eccl. iv. 2. His ideas of the Almighty now alarmed him; his life was a burden, and nothing but the fear of a future state, the *probability* of which he could not erase from his mind, prevented him from terminating an existence, that called for more than stoicism to enable him to bear.

CHAPTER II.

HIS ILLNESS—VISITED BY A FRIEND.

In the town to which Mr. B. removed, he had a friend, who having heard of his disaster, and fearful of the consequences, hastened to speak to him on the subject of religion, and, if possible, to lead his mind dispassionately to consider those great truths of Scripture, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. This office of christian charity had frequently been before attempted, but always without success; and so distasteful to him was the subject of religion, that he afterwards confessed, "he considered his friend's arguments as powerless on his mind as water thrown upon a rock; that he thought Mr. S. had an eye upon him to make him a methodist; and that, however good his intentions were in so doing, he viewed him as altogether mistaken in his doctrines and religious princi-

ples." It is evident from this that great caution was necessary, and that he was always on his guard when attacked in the strong-hold of his deistical notions. Mr. B. was not like many persons, who, as soon as the subject of religion is introduced, endeavour to evade and suppress it: he had a mind of a different character; he would patiently listen to all that might be advanced, and then endeavour by argument to maintain his own ground.

His friend well knew that the conversion of the mind to Divine truth was entirely out of the province of human ability: when, therefore, he visited him, it was with humble dependence upon God to direct him as to the portions of Scripture he should advance, and with prayer that he would bless his otherwise utterly unprofitable labours. Thus considering himself merely as an instrument, he strove as clearly as he could to set before him the whole of the gospel, and then left his work in the hands of God. With this view he called on him one fine morning in the month of April, 1822; it was also the Sabbath: he found his invalid friend lying on a sofa, having several volumes of some of the most

popular infidel writers spread open before him. After some allusion to the accident, his friend (Mr. S.) referred to the consolations derivable from the gospel in the hour of suffering and distress, but he evidently thought contemptuously of them, and seemed to adopt the maxim, that "the spirit of a man could sustain his infirmity;" and that, aided by philosophy, fortitude and resignation might easily be acquired. Referring to the infidel authors, whose works were on the table, he inquired, "If christianity be true, how can we account for so many men of extensive information, accurate reasoning, and patient investigation, rejecting it? How is it, that so few in all ages, among the learned, have embraced the Scriptures? How is it, with a desire to arrive at the truth, they have been forced to consider revelation as false?"

In answer to this, his attention was directed to the first and second chapters of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, whence it is deducible, that these very characters are themselves among the standing evidences of the truth of the gospel; he was also referred to Sir Isaac Newton, Boyle, and other men eminent in science and

literature, who not only believed the Scriptures to be the word of God, but had in a masterly and incontrovertible manner defended the christian religion from the attacks of its enemies, and had clearly shown that its origin was Divine. It was also observed, that the general dislike in mankind to religion arose from mistaken notions respecting it; that the doctrines and precepts of the Bible were far superior to what the world had any idea of, and that, were that book well understood, infidelity must be abandoned, the foundation on which it stands being prejudice and ignorance. Thus there are many happy instances of infidels becoming "faithful in Christ Jesus," and not one of a really converted christian lapsing finally into infidelity. He was advised at once to admit the genuineness of the Bible, and then to endeavour experimentally to discover whether its statements were or were not true; for in them, as in the book of nature, it is only by experience, that the works of the Almighty can be discovered: thus, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," John vii. 17.

This advice was given with some earnestness,

his friend having found the beneficial result of it in his own case; for at one time he had himself been the victim of scepticism, and had observed while searching for the evidences of christianity, that so long as the novelty of a newly discovered evidence lasted, it carried the desired conviction; but that, when this ceased, the mind again returned to its former doubts, and no salutary abiding effect was produced. In this difficulty he came to the determination, seeing how extensive were the promises and threatenings the Bible contained, that he would take it up as true, endeavour to make use of it as a Divine revelation, and by his own experience test its claims to inspiration. The result was most happy: he discovered it to be both the wisdom of God, and the power of God; and firmly trusts that no weapon from the armoury of Satan can ever destroy his confidence in its truth.

The reader will pardon this short digression, when he is informed that it is made with the hope that (should this book fall into the hands of any who are harassed by scepticism) this advice may prove as beneficial to them as it did to the writer, and also to Mr. Buchanan; who,

when he had discovered the *real* contents of the sacred Scriptures, found that his disbelief arose, not, as he had imagined, from superior light and knowledge, but from the absurdities of philosophy, falsely so called, and vain deceit, on which the superstructure of infidelity is commonly raised.

This was effected, it is true, solely by the power of Him, who by his Spirit leads his people into all truth, but then it was in the use of means, the communication of knowledge and unvarnished facts. But to return: after his friend had directed his attention to the portion of Scripture above referred to, on quitting the room, he left behind him his copy of the New Testament, trusting and praying that he might be induced to read it, and encouraging him to do so by assuring him that it contained subjects of the deepest interest, and not unworthy the examination of the most ingenious mind. But, alas! it was laid aside with indifference, and returned at the end of a fortnight without having been once opened. This fact is mentioned to show the striking providence connected with this rejection of the Divine word: it proved to

be the last time he was granted an opportunity of reading the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation! This indifference to sacred subjects continued for many months, until he was confined to his bed, where, to the day of his death, he was incapable, through weakness and disease, of perusing any book whatsoever, and the Bible, therefore, thus far was a sealed fountain of knowledge and wisdom. Frequently, during this period, did he earnestly wish that he could read the Scriptures, but this was then denied; when he could, he refused; when he would, God forbade! Let all who read of this painful dispensation neglect not the most precious treasure that can be put into their hands, lest, too late, they feel with deep remorse the force of the following declaration:—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation; and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they

call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord," Prov. i. 24—29. Reader, beware! Now is the accepted time: what may befal you on the morrow you know not!

CHAPTER III.

HE RELINQUISHES HIS VAIN PHILOSOPHY.

Mr. Buchanan continued firm in his infidel principles for many months, and no argument could shake the resolute determination of his mind. Mr. S. remembers one visit in particular, when a long discussion took place on the existence of a superintending Providence, which on the part of his friend was denied; and he attributed his present illness to circumstances purely accidental. But the question to be answered, in respect to the consequences of his fall, is this:—How happened it that, in this instance only, he should have received an injury which led to such serious results? He had met with falls before, apparently of a more dangerous kind; why did not these produce equal, if not greater mischief than this one? It could not have been for want of care on his part, for he used the greatest care;

nor was he accidentally brought to this spot, for he intentionally went thither: then, why all these unforeseen results on this occasion? What mind was at work in this affair? The only one perceptible was his own; but he, instead of facilitating this event, would, had he foreknown it, and been able effectually to oppose it, have altogether prevented it: there must have been the all-wise providence of God exercised in it,—the hand of Him "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."

During the summer of 1822, he gradually got worse: from being unable to walk, he took to the sofa, and from the sofa to his bed; where he was confined in a painful position on his back, and was hardly allowed a pillow for his head; but at length he became unable to move hand or foot; nor had he strength to raise himself upon his bed of suffering. In this helpless situation he continued for three years, until the summons came for him to exchange time for eternity.

View him now in the midst of his afflictions, his mind preying on his misfortunes, unsupported by the consolations of religion. View

him shut out from all the diversions of the world, from all intellectual pursuits and recreations; see him debarred not only of all the enjoyments of life, but made to possess months of vanity; see him harassed equally with the day and with the night, and suffering pain in every member, and we shall be unable to refrain from the deepest sympathy in his sufferings, while we feel how "fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God."

This was the proper season for his philosophy to manifest its power over the soul in adversity, to cheer it in the hour of sorrow; but it failed to do this; yea, it forsook him before he could be humbled to acknowledge its impotence. But at length, aware of its deceit, and suffering from its disappointments, he exclaimed, "I am weary of it; it is nothing better than vanity; it affords no stay; it gives no comfort to my mind!"

Thus, from its own impotence, fell the idol he had so long worshipped; but even now he had much to learn, and the truth as it is in Jesus was to him a mystery which he could not comprehend, and against which he still had much to object; yea, he probably, even at this time,

thought his arguments unanswerable, because his friend generally declined entering on a refutation of them: for, though he saw the fallacy of the propositions advanced, and could enter into his friend's feelings, having once had the same difficulties in his own mind, yet he now avoided any regular attempt at disproving them, for the two following reasons:—First, in many instances, the error of a proposition cannot be shown without the admission of several previous truths; these truths the writer of this memoir knew his friend was either unacquainted with, or did not understand; he therefore was aware that the recurring to them would lead to fruitless discussion, and fail, probably, in producing the desired conviction. The other reason was this —Observation had convinced him that, generally speaking, disputants only strengthen themselves in their own views, more frequently than carry conviction to the minds of their opponents. This may arise partly from the excitement occasioned in arguing a question, and from the prejudice we are too apt to entertain, not only in favour of our own views, but of our ability to maintain them.

The writer of this memoir preferred, therefore, laying before his friend a plain statement of scriptural truth, to an elaborate refutation of objections, except in such cases where a contrary course was required, as in the following instance, which occurred after Mr. B. had embraced the truth in the love of it:—"I have been much perplexed," he said, "since you were last here. I desired my sister to read to me the account of Christ's ascension, as narrated by each of the evangelists, and none of them seem to agree in their mention of the place whence he ascended. Matthew speaks of his disciples being appointed to meet him at a mountain in Galilee, whence, also, Mark seems to imply he went up into heaven; Luke says, he led them out as far as Bethany, and thence ascended; in the narrative of John, the last mention made of Jesus is at the sea of Tiberias; and, in the Acts of the Apostles, it is said, that he ascended from the Mount of Olives. Now it appears to me, that none of these accounts agree with each other: the places mentioned cannot be all one and the same; and if there be any evident inaccuracy in the Bible, how can we receive it as

the word of inspiration? Further, if we find such discrepancies in one instance, must we not be doubtful of almost every fact which it contains?" His mind was quite harassed until the matter was cleared up, and it was proved that there was no disagreement whatever in the statements of the evangelists. The fact is, Matthew makes no mention of our Lord's ascension, but only of the disciples' meeting him in Galilee; Mark speaks of his ascension, but does not say where it occurred; John gives no account of it, but merely mentions that Jesus was with the disciples at the sea of Tiberias after his resurrection; Luke says, that he led his disciples out as far as Bethany, and thence ascended; and, in the Acts of the Apostles, it is also said, that he ascended from the Mount of Olives, which is adjacent to Bethany, this village lying at its foot. Thus, St. Luke, in his Gospel, and in chapter I. of the Acts of the Apostles, is the only inspired writer who mentions the place of the ascension: Mark merely relates the fact, and the other evangelists speak only of Jesus' meeting his disciples in Galilee; and this at once explains the narrative, particularly when we

reflect that our Lord remained on the earth forty days after his resurrection.

We may see here how liable we are to draw erroneous conclusions from what appears at first plausible, but when investigated, is proved to be false; and how needful it is to read the Scriptures with a humble mind, and while we rely on Divine aid to render them available to our happiness, not to despise human learning and acquirements in their elucidation.

It was at length observable that Mr. B. began to lay aside his weapons of opposition: but, when this is stated, it is by no means to be inferred that he fully embraced the christian religion. It appeared, rather, that he was weary of endeavouring to maintain what he could not establish, and of labouring to oppose what he could not refute. He had discovered the fallacy of his pernicious sentiments, and began to feel the need of something to cheer and solace his mind under the pressure of increased sufferings and disappointments, and in the prospect of death. In this state of mind, the doctrines of the gospel began to be interesting to him, and a hope now arose, though faintly, within him,

that they might be true; and he began to wish them so.

The reader will here perceive, that a great change was commencing in his views and feelings respecting the Scriptures: he desired to believe them to be Divinely inspired. It is, indeed, a certain fact, that religion must have its origin in the heart; for when this is gained, all other difficulties are easily overcome: the rejection of the gospel by merely nominal christians, and of christianity by infidels, arises not so much from the opposition of the understanding, as of the affections. The Bible, though it proposes a sufficient remedy for the misery of man, is a book the tenor of which is contrary to the natural bias of his disposition; and there must, therefore, be a complete change in one or the other, before they can assimilate and agree. Hence some persons, when conscience is awakened, finding themselves unable and averse to reach the standard of truth, endeavour to bring it down to their own level; or they seek to persuade themselves that the whole is a fabrication of human ingenuity and fraud. The latter was the plan attempted by the subject of this

memoir: I say attempted; for though he openly rejected the Bible, and professed to regard religion as enthusiasm or superstition, yet he was never able fully to satisfy his mind that his views were correct. His infidelity arose in the first instance from a notion, that the Bible contained facts and statements confused and unintelligible, and from the state of his heart, wounded by disappointments. His principles acquired hence their force, by his refusing to examine the claims of christianity, and giving himself up to the teaching of infidel authors. He then was desirous to prove the Scriptures untrue, and to persuade himself that death was an eternal sleep, and that after the day of death there would be no day of judgment,—no heaven,—no hell! And probably, if God had granted him his heart's desire, worldly prosperity, he would have become hardened in his sin, and finally been given up "to believe a lie." But now his mind was softened by sorrow; it felt the need of repose, and he became willing to find comfort, even in revealed religion. But, it may be asked, did he at once receive cordially the great truths of Scripture? This he was

unable to do. He wished to believe, but he could not. He had difficulties to encounter unknown to minds which have never been poisoned with infidelity. His willingness to hear the Scriptures read, and to embrace them, gradually produced the desired results. As knowledge advanced, ignorance receded; and as the light of truth shone upon his mind, the darkness disappeared, until at last it was entirely superseded by the life-giving beams of the Sun of righteousness.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS BODILY SUFFERINGS—CONSOLATION UNDER THEM.

In the preceding pages we have noticed something of the power of infidelity: we have seen its power over the mind of the subject of this memoir, and that this power was always for evil, and not for good. In the following pages it will be contrasted with the soothing, comforting, and sustaining power of real religion.

> "O child of sorrow! be it thine to know
> That Scripture is the only cure of woe:
> That field of promise, how it flings abroad
> Its fragrance o'er the christian's thorny road!
> The soul, reposing on assured relief,
> Finds herself happy amidst seas of grief."

The writer, in describing the gradual change that he had the pleasure of witnessing in the mind of his friend, thinks it desirable to remark, that the limits of this memoir will not allow him

to give such a minute statement as the almost daily intercourse of three years might furnish: neither indeed is it necessary. Let it then suffice to observe, that the account in the succeeding pages, instead of being in the least exaggerated, falls far short in many interesting particulars of what might be advanced in justice to the subject.

It was, however, deeply interesting, either as a metaphysician, to contemplate the various changes of which the human mind is capable, and their causes; or, as a christian, to observe the efficacy and power of Divine truth under the various circumstances and trials in which Mr. B. was placed. Often did his friend, on entering the chamber of sorrow, find him exhausted with pain and grief, and ready almost to sink into despondency; and, ere he left it, witness the most striking effects produced by the conversation he had with him on religious subjects. His chilled and disconsolate heart would begin to glow with satisfaction and delight while contemplating the sacred truths of the Bible; the balm of sacred consolation would be felt and evinced in his mind: and his friend had frequently the

happiness of leaving him soothed, comforted, and resigned.

There is such a suitableness in the sacred volume to the various trials, situations, and circumstances of life, and to the diversified feelings of the heart, that some passage is easily met with that bears upon the present condition of the christian sufferer. Never, perhaps, was the truth of this sentiment more strikingly illustrated than by the discoveries arising from these visits; for, whatever happened to be the prevailing trial at the time, the Bible furnished some appropriate truth, which seemed, as it were, written for the peculiar occasion to which it was made applicable.

The visits to the sick room of his friend began to be more frequent about the close of the autumn of the year 1822. Among the first of these visits, in the evening, he remembers one in particular, when he endeavoured to draw his attention to the important declaration of our Lord in the third chapter of St. John's gospel:—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." To do this the more effectually, he brought with him an able sermon on that text, which he proposed to read. This

proposal Mr. B. readily assented to, at the same time saying, that he could not comprehend the subject, though it appeared all-important; and that, if regeneration were necessary for any one, it certainly was for him. He wished, therefore, to hear what could be said upon it: he listened with deep attention, and his inquiring mind appeared much satisfied with the exposition he heard of that important declaration.

When the sermon was read through, the conversation turned upon inherent, or as it is more generally called, original sin. He could not believe that all mankind came into life with a sinful nature, but supposed that sin was the result of example and association. He saw at once, that if the doctrine of universal depravity could be proved, the necessity of regeneration would immediately follow; and that our Lord's words to Nicodemus were true to the fullest extent—"Ye MUST be born again."

The testimony of Scripture on this point, and the arguments by which the doctrine of regeneration is proved, were then laid before him, in humble dependence on God, who alone has power to open the eyes of sinners to their state

—to bring them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Nor was this labour in vain; for in some subsequent visits which the writer paid, he had the satisfaction of finding that his invalid friend was fully convinced of the truth, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psa. li. 5. Now he felt assured that man's nature inclines him only to evil; that the root of this evil is in the heart, and that therefore the heart must undergo an entire change before a sinner can make any progress in holiness. He saw, consequently, his need of regeneration by the Spirit of God; for the idea of renewing his own nature appeared to him manifestly absurd; and hence he began to seek in prayer, that the promise of a "new heart, and a right spirit" might be fulfilled in him, and that he might be made a "new creature in Christ Jesus." This evening was one on which the writer's memory loves to dwell. It was spent in the interchange of sentiment, in the investigation of Divine truth, in the sympathies of a friendship commenced on earth, to be perfected, he trusts, in that world where there shall

be no more pain, and where sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Every subsequent visit, however, was not of the same pleasing character: many, indeed, there were, in which the same intellectual pleasures were repeated and enjoyed; but there were others of a painful and distressing nature, when human sympathy could avail nothing, and sufferings were endured which no one could alleviate or soothe.

One evening in particular is remembered: it was in the month of December, 1822. The writer found his friend suffering the most acute pain, caused partly by the application of a caustic. He said he could compare its effect to nothing so justly as to the pouring of burning liquid down his back. At this time also, he had not been able to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus; he knew not, therefore, where to seek for real comfort. In vain did his friend assure him that

> "Afflictions from the hand of God
> Are blessings in disguise;"

and that we must patiently, and even thankfully, endure chastisement, whereof all are partakers.

The groans and cries he uttered during this paroxysm of pain, were truly heart-rending: when it had in some degree subsided, the writer, to beguile his time, and to improve the opportunity, read portions of the Bible connected with suffering and distress. When an hour had been spent in this manner, never having made such a request before, he desired his friend to read to him the gospel of St. John. It was hence evident that the word of God had begun to find its way to his heart, and that in the midst of his sufferings it had afforded him some alleviation. Mr. S. accordingly commenced reading that gospel, which so engaged and interested his attention that he would not allow him to close the book till one o'clock the following morning. Ah! little did he imagine, when his friend returned on a former occasion, the Testament unread, that the hour would come, when in extreme anguish of body he would desire it to be read to him, as the only means of giving him comfort. May we not here see a specimen of God's dealings with mankind? He offers his salvation and truth to all the race of Adam; but in the day of prosperity men will not hear: they

put away the word of God far from them. The consequence is, that he either suffers them to pursue their own course undisturbed, as of old, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone," until they are brought to the grave, where there is no repentance; or else he lays affliction upon their loins, giving them the bread of adversity, and plenteousness of tears to drink, and thus brings them in their trouble to call upon God for help. In their affliction, he causes them by his Spirit to seek him early.

Mr. B.'s sufferings indeed seemed to be made peculiarly useful to him. Every fresh stroke of the Divine rod, though at first it caused his heart to say, in rebellious murmurs, as Jonah did, "I do well to be angry;" yet afterwards was instrumental in causing it to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Thus every additional trial seemed more blessed in its results than those that preceded it. There is, of course, nothing in the nature of afflictions themselves calculated to soften the heart and bring it to God, but rather to draw it farther from him, through its depravity. But when pain, and grief, and disappointment are sanctified by the

grace of God, they are frequently made the means of rendering us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; hence many are the afflictions of the righteous: and thus, as their Divine Master was, they are made perfect through suffering.

The afflictions of Mr. Buchanan were made useful to him in various ways: they were the means of stirring up and causing him to see the corruptions and depravity of his heart more powerfully than he could otherwise have seen them: this self-knowledge and sense of his own vileness, were rendered subservient in destroying all his pretensions to self-righteousness and legal confidence, and produced deep humiliation and self-abasement; and hence his mind, as a well-cultivated soil, was prepared to receive the seed of the Divine word; the gospel of the grace of God, offering freely pardon and peace to the vilest of sinners. Christ was thus eventually rendered precious to his soul in all his mediatorial offices and work, and especially in his perfect righteousness, as the ground of justification. On this, and this alone, did he rest all his hope for acceptance in the last great day.

Once, when Mr. S. called, and found him somewhat dejected through the severity of his pain, he read to him the following hymn, which, as its sentiments accorded with his own feelings, was frequently afterwards read at his request.

Lord, I am pain'd, but I resign
My body to thy will:
'Tis grace, 'tis wisdom all divine
Appoints the pains I feel.

Dark as the ways of Providence,
When those who love thee groan,
Thy reasons lie conceal'd from sense,
Mysterious and unknown.

Yet nature may have leave to speak,
And plead before her God,
Lest the o'erburdened heart should break,
Beneath thy heavy rod.

The mournful groans and flowing tears
Give my poor spirit ease,
While every groan my Father hears,
And every tear he sees.

Is not some smiling hour at hand,
With peace upon its wings?
Give it, O God, thy swift command,
With all the joy it brings!

Another favourite hymn in which he found much comfort, is also well known, and commences:—

O Zion, afflicted with wave upon wave,
Whom no man can comfort, whom no man can save.

CHAPTER V.

HIS GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE.

FROM this period Mr. B. had the Scriptures read to him regularly, and began also to seek after a knowledge of Divine truth; but the unenlightened state of his mind rendered the simple reception of the doctrines he heard extremely difficult. They appeared incomprehensible, and even contradictory. The light was beginning to shine upon his dark mind, but the darkness there comprehended it not; and he again had to encounter the same difficulty which in a former instance had proved so injurious to him. His friend assured him that the same conflict had once harassed his own mind, but that as his knowledge of Divine truth increased, it became less severe, and these difficulties gradually vanished. He was earnestly advised, therefore, to wait on God,—to implore

the teaching of his Holy Spirit,—to ask wisdom of Him who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Mr. S. was very desirous to show him, that all spiritual blessings come from God, and are all free gifts of the Most High. It is He who by his Spirit leads his people into all truth; it is He who bestows saving faith,—"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:" it is He who "sheds abroad his love in our hearts," and who indeed is the Giver of "every good and perfect gift." This endeavour to convince Mr. B. of the important truth of man's salvation being from first to last the gift of God, led him to show the necessity of seeking God in prayer, and to a consideration of the manner in which prayer should be made. He had hitherto always neglected this great duty and privilege, and knew not how to pray. He had, it is true, admired God in his created works, and expressed powerfully his admiration of the Divine attributes displayed in them, and had even formally sometimes joined in public worship, but his mind had perhaps never made a direct appeal to God, as a God of justice, truth, and love. In prayer

we address immediately an invisible and ever-present God, whose power could crush us in a moment; whose justice might doom us to eternal death; who requires truth in the inward parts; who is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

Mr. B. felt his mind almost overpowered by the idea of attempting to draw nigh to so great and gracious a God in prayer. At this time too he felt himself a sinner: he knew that he had broken the Divine law, and was obnoxious to its denunciations; but he knew not Jesus as the Mediator between God and man; the only way of access to the throne of grace was but dimly seen. Such, however, was the state of his heart, that he could not be satisfied with remaining far from God any longer; he was miserable without him; and at last, after many severe conflicts, he endeavoured to pray.

On the following morning when Mr. S. called, he said that he had attempted to pray to God, but that he found something so overpowering in doing it, that he hardly, from a sensation of awe, knew what to say. The work of grace was evidently begun within him; and did the

limits of this memoir allow a full delineation to be given of the gradual progress of the Divine life in his soul, it would prove a striking instance of the reality and power of vital religion, and of the operation of the Holy Spirit on the sinner's heart, overcoming all obstacles, and prevailing to the overthrow of the dominion of Satan and of sin.

Mr. B. was necessarily deprived of the benefit of all the public means of grace: the sabbath returned to millions with its promised public blessings, but not to him: he had not the advantage of hearing the blessed truths of the gospel from the ministers of religion, nor of joining with the Lord's people in prayer and praise, and thanksgiving: he was even unable, as has been stated, to read the Bible; all that he enjoyed, as means of grace, was limited to hearing that sacred Book read and explained by his friend, with occasional conversation on some of the leading doctrines of christianity. Mr. S. well knew that he could not himself effect a saving change in the heart of his afflicted friend; that he could not give him "an understanding in Him that is true." But it afforded him great

satisfaction to perceive that he was made instrumental in comforting and cheering the many dreary hours his friend had to pass through, and also, he trusts, of imparting to him, in some measure, a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. This knowledge was blessed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, who enlightened the afflicted man's mind, and worked in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure. This was done, not by impulses and visions; but by giving him the power to comprehend the truth in his mind, and to receive it in the love of it. It not unfrequently happened, that some passage of the word of God would remain upon his mind as hard to be understood; his memory being tenacious, other passages would be brought to bear upon it, and to elucidate it; and this, with earnest prayer to God, enabled him to overcome many difficulties, and obtain a clearer insight into "the mystery of godliness." The writer of this memoir was, at this time, much astonished and gratified by the soundness and excellence of many remarks he made on the subjects of their conversation. We have said that he had begun to pray. This was at first considered by him

rather as a duty than a privilege, and many things rendered the performance of it difficult. His ignorance of Divine things, the natural hardness of the human heart, and his great bodily sufferings, all combined to retard his approaches to the throne of grace. Also the great enemy of souls used his endeavours to cause him to desist: for his friend, on calling one evening, found him in a very gloomy, desponding state of mind; and was soon distressed by hearing him exclaim, "Of what use is it for me to pray? I pray again and again, but God seems not to regard my words: He will not hear. What ground have I for believing that the Supreme Being will condescend to notice my petitions?" "Here is your ground," said his friend, taking up the Bible: "Jesus spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for awhile: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this

widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke xviii. 1—8.

In this parable Jesus seems to say, "If a wicked man, uninfluenced by any compassion towards a suppliant, grants her petition, how much more shall my heavenly Father, who is all compassion and boundless love, attend to the cry of his afflicted and confiding creatures!" His attention was also directed to another parable of similar import, at the beginning of the eleventh chapter of St. Luke's Gospel; and also to the promise made to prayer in the following words of our Lord: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He was also told that God's delays were not denials, that his promise having been made must be fulfilled, and he must rely on the Divine word.

These portions of Scripture appeared to take hold of his attention; yet it was not till some

months afterwards that he told his friend, that it was impossible for him to have an idea of the benefit the reading of these parables had been to him; they had made an impression on his mind which he believed never could be effaced, and had been the means of encouraging him, and strengthening him in prayer, when ready to faint, and to abandon it in despair.

The unhappy notions which had so long filled his mind, rendered his reception of Divine mysteries very difficult. The nature of Christ, (though he doubted not it was Divine,) the doctrine of the Trinity, the Person and offices of the Holy Spirit, were subjects which caused him much anxious thought; while such passages as the following were the constant subjects of his meditation: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Often did he harass his mind in endeavouring fully to understand these mysterious truths, and his

metaphysical bias assisted not a little to increase his perplexity.

It is not for us to pry into those things which, though revealed, are revealed as mysteries. Presumption here is the forerunner of danger, as it was with some of old, whose curiosity tempted them to look into the ark, and who perished for so doing. We are required to believe what God has revealed, to receive his testimony in all things as true. To account for the facts and statements contained in revelation is not within the province of finite reason, because those facts and statements are essentially connected with things infinite and eternal. "Secret things belong to God," whose "glory it is to conceal a matter;" but such as are revealed belong to us, and are "written for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." In understanding the word of God, the pride of human reason and acquirements must give way to the teachableness and humility of the wisdom which is from above. He only comes to a knowledge of the truth who, like Mary, sits at the feet of Jesus, that Teacher sent from God; who

admonishes and instructs us, saying, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 3. The subject of this brief memoir was brought at last to feel the force of this declaration: often did he refer to it, and bear testimony to the soundness of the apostle's exhortation, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." 1 Cor. iii. 18.

During this year (1823) Mr. B.'s mind began to expand more and more to the reception of divine truths; but his progress was slow, and attended with much opposition from within; he had, as it were, to contest every step he advanced. Hence he learned more thoroughly the depravity of his own heart, and saw more clearly the importance and truth of the leading doctrines of the gospel.

He now readily admitted that the providence of God is exercised in all things, and began to discover the necessity for, and reason of those chastisements he was called upon to endure, and which ultimately produced in him the peaceable

fruits of righteousness. In them he experienced the support derivable from the promises of God, the prevalence of prayer, and the need of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. But at present he had made greater progress in knowledge than in grace. Occasionally, when severely tried, his spirit would manifest something of its native violence, but still there was now this difference between his present and former state: he could not sin without deeply wounding his conscience, inducing fear and dread upon his mind, and bringing his offence to the cross with much sorrow and humility. He would also complain much of the hardness of his heart, and of his inability to love God in the manner mentioned in the Bible. But his friend remembers this year many seasons when his mind was much subdued and softened under a sense of the Divine goodness and love, and when he struggled, not in vain, to be resigned to the will of God in deep distress.

It may be desirable to mention one of these periods, when religion seemed to evince its power in bringing peace to his mind. One morning, when his friend called, he found he had been suffering considerable distress, both of

body and mind, during the preceding night; but that then his spirit was calm, resigned, and enjoying sweet communion with God; he appeared melted under a sense of the Divine mercy and forbearance towards him. When interrogated respecting his sufferings, he said, "It is all right: it is all well! Let Him do with me as seemeth Him good; I am willing, if it be His purpose, to bear as much again." At that moment he appeared to be

> "Passive in his Maker's hands,
> To know no will but his."

The year following saw the work of grace more powerfully displayed in him, which, though gradual, was not on that account the less satisfactory. One evening in the month of February, in the course of conversation, Mr. S. happened to make some remarks on the nature of satanic influence, when he discovered that the views of his afflicted friend on this subject were very erroneous. He read several passages of Scripture to show to him the character of Satan as there described, and the nature and extent of his power over the human race. Much

conversation on the subject ensued, and ere they separated, his friend commended him to God in prayer. From this time to the month of Juné, being absent from Ilfracombe, he had no opportunity of witnessing the state of his mind, but he learned with pain that he had suffered more severely in his body, and that he had been brought nigh to the gates of death, and fully expected he should soon die.

Upon his return, the writer of this memoir noticed that his friend's views concerning satanic agency were changed, which induced him to inquire what had led to the alteration; he replied thus:—"I was convinced of it from the following circumstance: when I was so ill the other day, expecting to breathe my last every moment, I wished and prayed earnestly that my mind might be solemnised and prepared for so awful an event. I was able in some degree, to trust in Christ as my Saviour, but I was harassed by the most blasphemous and horrible thoughts forcing themselves continually into my mind,—thoughts that I never entertained before, and that I would have given all I had to have banished. The distress and alarm they occa-

sioned me were almost inconceivable. Of these Satan must have been the author and promoter, for I never before had, nor then could have imagined them; but used my utmost endeavours to expel them. They came, therefore, from the prince of darkness, who was permitted to trouble me; and since that dreadful trial, I cannot doubt for a moment who and what he is."

It was thus that he was taught experimentally the truths he had to learn; and it was thus that he learned to value more highly the Scriptures, and to prize the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which they contain. But we are by no means to suppose there was any thing visionary or enthusiastic in his views and feelings: this was so far from being the case, that his natural character had a contrary bias. It was necessary that whatever he believed, should possess strong claims to his credence; and whatsoever he felt arose from the conviction of facts, and not from the fancies of an over-ardent imagination.

CHAPTER VI.

SKETCHES OF HIS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

A MUCH esteemed and able writer of the present day observes, that "while we acknowledge there is such a thing as enthusiasm, the admission shall not drive us to take up with a religion that consists in nothing but speculative opinions, and lifeless ceremonies, and formal duties. Religion is indeed a practical thing, but it is also experimental. It does include truths, but in a christian they become principles; they descend from the head to the heart, and there grace reigns through righteousness unto everlasting life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The christian does not destroy, but sanctifies and employs the passions of human nature, and calls into exercise his love, his fears, his sorrows, and his joys; and thus religion becomes a living principle, actuating the whole man."

We have hitherto viewed the subject of this brief memoir as awaking out of the sleep of sin, and coming to Christ for light; we shall now see what effect this light had upon his conduct.

It was sometimes feared by the writer of this memoir, that his friend's knowledge, which increased rapidly, would outstrip his experience of its sanctified power. He was anxious to see, that while his understanding was enlightened, his heart was also correspondingly affected, and that he gave satisfactory evidence of being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. This evidence became gradually more satisfactory; and our Lord's parable, likening the kingdom of heaven unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, received a striking illustration in him. It has already been mentioned, that many of the graces, all of which shine forth with more or less lustre in every believer, were visible in his conduct and conversation; but it was not until the latter end of August in this year (1824) that his friend observed evidences of conversion which convinced him that he had found the Pearl of great price, even Jesus, his SAVIOUR and his ALL.

He believes he shall never forget the day to which he now refers: about noon, he received a message from his invalid friend, requesting him to call as soon as convenient. On entering the room, he was struck with the holy calm and serene expression of joy which shone forth in his countenance; they were such as he had never witnessed before. "I have sent for you," he said, "I have sent for you, because I feel assured it will give you pleasure to know the peace, the happiness I feel. My heart experiences sensations hitherto unknown!" The writer feels it impossible by any language he can use to convey to the reader an adequate idea of the manner and appearance of his friend; they were such as to fill him with wonder and delight.

But it may be asked, Whence this apparently sudden change? whence this peace and joy? If no adequate cause could be assigned for it, it might be esteemed a species of enthusiasm; but this was not the case: it was religious experience flowing from the exercise of religious principles. The preceding night had been spent in holy communion with "the Father, and with

his Son Jesus Christ," in meditating on some of the most important truths of the Bible, and in prayer that they might have a sanctified influence upon his soul; and hence it was, that he was now filled with "joy and peace in believing, and abounded in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." He had for several days previous been a great deal distressed with spiritual darkness; he had been unable to feel comfort in prayer; he could not possess a sense of God's presence as a reconciled God and Father in Christ; but this rendered his petitions more earnest and fervent till his request was granted, and the dark and cloudy day of his soul was exchanged for the clear shining after the rain.

Now, he said, he had such a view of the sufferings of Christ,—of the mercy and goodness of God towards sinners, as quite overpowered him. He felt humbled and ashamed under a sense of his own vileness, obstinacy, and rebellion against the law of God, which is holy, just, and good; he perceived, also, the gracious purposes of his heavenly Father in his present afflictions, which had been instrumental in bringing him to Christ, and felt assured that the work which

he had begun in his soul he would complete. As before he had been dead in sin, now he seemed dead unto sin, but alive unto God, and desired to know nothing but his will, and do nothing but his pleasure. He could say with St. Paul, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Rom. v. 11. The beginning of this chapter also so well describes his state at this time, that I cannot but transcribe it:— "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

He said, "You know I have often lamented that I could not love God: now I cannot help loving him. What an astonishing display of wisdom, justice, power and love there is in the

salvation revealed to us in the gospel! What wonderful condescension in a Being so great employing such a method to restore such rebellious, miserable, insignificant creatures as we are, to his favour and happiness! I see now that He is in all my sufferings, and by them bringing me nearer to himself: I see it is all mercy! Never, never ought I to murmur. I used to think that God had singled me out as a mark for the arrows of his wrath; but I feel it is in love and tender mercy that he has chastened me, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

He used, on this occasion, many similar expressions, manifesting the happy state of his mind. To his friend he further said, "You understand what I say, and can rejoice with me, and praise God on my behalf. The world would now call me an enthusiast: once I should have coincided with the world in this opinion; but I was then ignorant, as the world is ignorant, of the nature of vital religion." "Ah," said his friend, "you remind me of a beautiful passage in one of the prophets, where God speaking of his church, says, "Behold, I will allure her,

and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Hosea ii. 14, 15. This passage was quite new to him, and powerfully arrested his attention. He inquired where it was written, and requested that it might again be read to him, which having been done, he exclaimed, "How true it is! how exactly does it describe my state, and the method God has been pleased to take to restore me to his favour!" This was spoken with great earnestness, and at the same time with great sweetness of manner: his soul seemed to shine forth through his countenance, which cheered the heart of his friend, who could not but exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

After conversing thus for a considerable time, Mr. Buchanan requested his friend to offer up a prayer for him before they separated, which he did, and then returned home, praising God for what he had seen and heard.

It has often been remarked, that seasons such

as these not unfrequently precede some trial, being granted to fortify and prepare the mind for the difficulties with which it will have to contend. This was the case in the present instance. Mr. B. was seized suddenly with a violent attack of diarrhœa, which so reduced his already debilitated frame, that hope of life was given up. His friend sat by his bed-side, expecting every moment to witness his last struggle.

During this severe trial, his composure of mind was graciously continued to him; and while feeling himself on the verge of eternity, he was enabled to commit his soul into the hands of Jesus, as into the hands of a faithful Creator and merciful Redeemer. He appeared to enjoy the "full assurance of hope," and had a deep sense of the Divine love and mercy. He calmly and collectedly gave directions respecting the disposal of his worldly affairs; and then seemed to have done with the things of time, and to be wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the momentous concerns of eternity.

But the hour of his departure was not so near as it appeared to be; for it pleased God to remove in a short time the complaint which

threatened his earthly existence. His life was prolonged that he might learn more of his own heart, and of the dealings of an all-wise, faithful, and unchanging God, and evidence more fully the reality of that spiritual life which was already begun in his soul. Another year was added to his term of days. Perhaps some may suppose that this was spent in the experience of unvaried comfort, peace, and happiness of mind; and that during this short and last stage he went on his way rejoicing: but this was not the case. The christian's hidden life is a chequered one, sometimes cloudy, sometimes bright with the beams of the Sun of righteousness. "There are," says the excellent writer already quoted, "variations in the inward man, the hidden man of the heart; and these changes are no inconsiderable evidences of the reality of a work of grace, in distinction from religious pretences. The picture of a tree is invariable; but the tree itself has its seasons: at one time it is leafless, and the sap, though not destroyed, retires into the root: at another it revives, and buds, and blossoms, and is filled with fruitfulness. I walk in my garden, and see the stones arranged there

always the same; but it is otherwise with the flowers and plants; and the reason is, because the former are dead, while the latter have in them a principle of life. And such is the difference between a man who is alive to God, and one that hath "a name to live, but is dead."

The writer does not attempt a very minute detail of the whole of Mr. Buchanan's religious experience; but rather a sketch, in which the more prominent features are portrayed: the intermediate seasons are left for the christian reader to supply as his own knowledge of Divine things will enable him to do.

The hour of spiritual life and light just mentioned was succeeded by a time of apathy, darkness, and almost deadness. His love to God seemed to have lost its fire, his hopes languished, his faith waxed feeble; and hence even prayer became a burden and a task. Resignation and comfort appeared to have forsaken his breast; and his language at times was not unlike the complaint of Job:—"Even to-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning." The peculiarity of his situation was calculated also to protract the dearth of the

blessedness he had before known; for he was deprived of many private means of grace, as well as of the vast advantages of public worship, by which the oppressed believer is made to "renew his strength, to mount up as on eagles' wings, to run, and not be weary, to walk, and not faint."

His situation at this time was very affecting: day after day he lay in solitude and suffering: there was nothing to vary the painful scene. If for a moment any hope of recovery was kindled, it was only by its extinction to render his darkness and disappointment greater. If he reviewed the past, it was to feel more acutely, that it was all vanity and vexation of spirit. If he looked inward, into the recesses of his heart, he perceived how great was his rebellion against the Divine will, and his insensibility to the Divine mercy. If he looked forward, all hope of recovery was as distant as it was faint; and the prospect of death afforded him no comfort, but rather deepened the gloom of his present misery.

At this time, his friend, in one of his visits, found him in a desponding, melancholy state of mind, and harassed with much bodily suffering: like the psalmist he seemed to say, "I am weary

of my groaning:" "I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long: my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh." The feelings of Job, as they are expressed in the following verses, were similar to his: "Oh that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." Job vi. 2—4.

He refused the comfort offered by his friend: he declined even the proposal to read to him a portion of Scripture, saying, "I cannot bear it now: my religion has been as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away. Had my life been cut off when I was recently so ill, and so happy, it had been well; but now where is my hope? I cannot pray: I have for days past attempted it, but in vain: my prayer seems a mockery of God."

His friend used every endeavour to encourage him to "lift up his eyes unto the hills, from

whence cometh our help:" he assured him that, though we change, God changeth not, and, *therefore*, we are not consumed. He reminded him of that "covenant which is ordered in all things and sure:" he showed the nature of this covenant, and pointed out some of its provisions as they are set forth in the 89th Psalm:—"If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. I have sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David."

He further said to him, "If you ever drew nigh to God, it was in consequence of this covenant; for 'whom he did predestinate them he also called.' If you have ever loved God, remember what the apostle John says, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' Further, our Lord declares, 'No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'

Has God, therefore, at any time dealt graciously with you to disappoint you, to destroy you afterwards? Impossible! He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Let the past then be your encouragement: let it stimulate you to seek him with renewed zeal and love: let his faithfulness be your shield and buckler. But, supposing you have never drawn nigh to God in sincerity, is it not time for you to do so now? Hear his language to sinners: 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' If you in time past have gone to Christ as your Saviour, and have since declined from the way of life, still there is encouragement and hope: 'Return,' he exclaims, 'and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful.' 'I will heal their backsliding, saith the Lord; I will love them freely.'"

With many such words did his friend encourage his desponding mind, assuring him that God had never said to any of the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face in vain." These conversations

were sometimes productive of evident benefit, and were instrumental, through Divine grace, of reviving his drooping soul, and of animating him in the way everlasting; for in a short time he had the gratification of seeing the darkness gradually disappear before the rays of the Sun of righteousness shining on his soul. This revival was not rapid, but it was genuine. There was less of fervour in his state than in the preceding August; but he seemed to possess more knowledge and humility; more submission and reliance on God as a covenant God in Christ. Thus it was seen, that He "who had begun a good work in him, was perfecting it until the day of Jesus Christ." "The Lord," as Newton observes in one of his letters, "sometimes shows us what he can do in and for us; and at other times, how unable we are to stand without him: but when he restores the joy of his salvation, how greatly do we value his presence from having felt the misery of the loss of it; and how is our detestation and dread of sin increased!"

By a variety of these and other exercises, through the overruling and sanctifying influences

of the Holy Spirit, believers are trained up to a growing knowledge of themselves, and of the Lord; they learn to be more distrustful of their own heart, and to depend more upon the Holy Spirit, who "helpeth our infirmities," for strength in the Divine life, and to trust more implicitly on the righteousness of Christ for justification. The repeated and multiplied pardons which they have received increase their admiration of, and gratitude for the rich, sovereign, abounding mercy of the covenant.

CHAPTER VII.

SKETCHES OF HIS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

THE quotation with which the last chapter closed, may be considered as descriptive of Mr. Buchanan's experience of spiritual things. As he advanced towards the close of his short life, and drew nearer to the "rest that remains for the people of God," he grew increasingly humbled under a sense of his own vileness, and repeated failures in striving to attain to a conformity to the Divine will. He could say with the apostle, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

These truths he was continually taught to experience; and so incessantly did he feel the plague of his own heart, and perceive how poor were his attempts to love and serve God, that had he not had a believing view of Christ, and a reliance on his promises, he would have sunk under a sense of his own unworthiness and guilt. But having been taught by the Spirit of God, by Him who leadeth into all truth, how God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; and being enabled to believe on him who justifieth the ungodly, he had a good hope through grace of pardon and peace; which hope he held fast "as the anchor of his soul, both sure and stedfast." Likewise his desires for a closer walk with God became more lively; and he sought more earnestly in persevering prayer "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," to subdue his iniquities, and to transform him more perfectly into the Divine image.

The writer remembers seeing him often broken-hearted under a sense of some fresh-contracted transgression. At such seasons he would contrast the mercy, forbearance, goodness, and love of God towards himself with his

own rebellion, ingratitude, and unworthiness; and not unfrequently have the tears which flowed down his cheeks evinced the contrition of his soul.

Mr. S. remarked that these lapses, though criminal in themselves, are often made the means of destroying in us all legal dependence, of humbling us, of endearing to us more fully the righteousness of Christ, and ultimately, therefore, of advancing us in righteousness and true holiness. God may judicially punish us for one sin by permitting us to fall into another, thereby causing us to suffer severely. This will embitter sin more than ever, and make us to see more of the evil it contains. Speaking of this method of humbling the believer, Mr. Buchanan would often say, "But it is a painful process: it is distressing, when we would be all that is good, to find that we are all vile and polluted." The deeply experimental sentiments expressed in the following hymn found a ready response in his heart:—

I ask'd the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and hope, and every grace—
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hop'd that in some favour'd hour,
At once he'd grant me my request;
And by his love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Lord, why is this? I trembling cried;
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
'Tis in this way, the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of worldly joy,
That thou may'st seek thy all in me.

As Mr. Buchanan's spiritual progress manifested itself, he appeared more interested in contemplating the law of God. The clearness of his views on this important subject showed that he was taught of Him who hath said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." The extent of its

demands, its holy nature, its blessed tendency, were clearly seen and acknowledged by him. While he felt that by the law could no flesh be justified in the sight of God, he knew that Jesus having fulfilled it in every part, his righteousness is imputed to all who believe in his name for justification unto life. As he advanced in the knowledge of the law of God, he became more savingly acquainted with Jesus also as the appointed Mediator between God and man, in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King: he thence began even to glory in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh; and viewed him as "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

The periods to which this chapter relates were the end of 1824 and the commencement of the following year. Till the spring of this year, his bodily state remained without much variation: he appeared neither to be advancing towards recovery, nor decidedly getting worse: this stationary condition not a little tried his patience, since it was composed of wearisome days, and more wearisome nights. He endeavoured to be

resigned; and became at length able to say, "Father, not my will, but thine be done."

But he seemed to derive peculiar comfort from a sense of the sympathy of the Saviour with the members of his church. Often did he say to Mr. S. "I cannot indeed describe to you what a consolation the sympathy of Christ is to me in my sufferings: it soothes me, and endears him to me more than I can express. We have not, I feel, an high Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are; yet without sin. He was man as well as God, and knows what our sufferings and temptations are: he knows what I feel, and he sympathises with me in my trials and distress. In all our afflictions he is afflicted; and they are all under his appointment and superintendence." He was particularly fond of having read to him, as has been already observed, the hymn beginning, "O Zion, afflicted with wave upon wave," which frequently was of much comfort to him.

When greatly distressed by his bodily infirmities and diseases, and ready even against the wish of his heart to complain, his friend once

said to him, "Perhaps you know not what your present situation requires: it fulfils God's purposes respecting you: it may be, and probably is instrumental in advancing his glory: now you cannot perceive the wise and gracious design of God, but at last you will acknowledge, when in heaven you review the way he has led you, that you have not suffered one pain too much, and that all was needful which he called upon you to endure." To this he answered, "It is indeed all-wise! I know that I ought not to complain; rather let me bear the appointed rod."

This period was one in which he was evidently advancing in the divine life: his views were clearer, his faith stronger, and his resignation more entire. At times he felt his afflictions to be light in comparison with his blessings, while he looked forward to an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

True, he was not even now without seasons of doubt and depression, in which he felt his soul cleaving to the dust; but he never henceforth entirely lost the savour of divine things,

nor felt his hope withdrawn at the throne of grace. In his happier moments, when his soul was revived by the Spirit of God, there was ardour, but not to excess; it was accompanied by great soberness and stedfastness. Indeed naturally, he did not possess much enthusiasm of feeling, but what he felt he felt deeply; and his sincerity was unquestioned. Owing to the reserve of his character, he was really known but by few; and the writer of this memoir was unacquainted with many excellent qualities in him till some time after his last illness, when religion had begun to affect his heart. Among the books read to him at this time, the following seemed the most useful: "Scott's Essays," "Jay's Discourses and Sermons," which he much admired; and, above all, "Newton's Letters." It is impossible to say how beneficial they were to his anxious, inquiring, and scrupulous mind. At his request they were read to him again and again; and they did more to build him up in the truth, and to regulate his feelings, than any other volume, except the Bible.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES.

As the reader has been made acquainted with Mr. Buchanan's state of mind, and the unhappy sentiments he had imbibed in early youth, it may not perhaps be altogether uninteresting in this chapter to give a summary of the religious principles he now entertained. The contrast will be striking, and will explain the grounds of the triumph he was about to obtain over death and the grave.

I.—He fully admitted the great doctrine of the Trinity: this Divine mystery no longer harassed his mind, but was the source of much comfort. He knew by experience the importance and force of that passage in Eph. ii. 18; "Through him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Hence, in the exercise of prayer, all his plea in approaching

God, all his hope of acceptance, and all his expectations of an answer to his petitions, were through Jesus Christ, as his righteousness and Advocate; and in obtaining access to the throne of grace, he felt his dependence on the influence of the Holy Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, and teaches us what to pray for, enabling us to cry, "Abba, Father."

In the whole plan of human redemption, he saw the same doctrine shining forth, and essentially supporting it. The following passage in St. Peter's 1st Epistle, was expressive of his view on a point connected with this: believers in Christ Jesus being "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Hence he derived his hope in God the Father, his faith in God the Son, and his sanctification, light, and knowledge from God the Holy Ghost; and by the exercise of these principles, he had "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;" and at length that "peace which passeth all understanding."

II.—He also fully received the doctrine, that

Jesus Christ was not only "God over all, blessed for evermore," but also that He, as the Word, "became flesh, and dwelt among us;" or, as it is expressed by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, that he "took upon him our nature, became partaker of flesh and blood, was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, was made of a woman, made under the law." In this character he received Jesus as having perfectly fulfilled the law of God, and as having thus brought in everlasting righteousness, which is imputed to every member of his spiritual body the church; as it is written, "the righteousness of God, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe," and by which we are "accepted in the Beloved."

But he received Jesus not only as having obeyed the law for us, but also as having paid by his death the penalty of our disobedience, as having made his soul an offering for sin, and thus redeemed those who were under the curse, that they might receive the adoption of sons. Hence his obedience was of infinite merit, and his atonement of infinite extent. Whilst he believed that "he who knew no sin was made

sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," Mr. Buchanan did not deny, but freely admitted, that "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

III.—His views of the state of man, both before and after the fall, were such as accorded with the tenor of the word of God. Man, he considered, was created in the image of God, and was holy in his nature, till he was tempted, and yielded to the power of the temptation offered to him. Had children been born to him before the loss of the Divine favour and image, they would have been holy too, and subject only to the law by which their progenitor was bound: but in consequence of his sin, a new condition affected all his posterity: all became sinners through him their first parent and federal head. In Adam all die: in him all are partakers of a sinful nature, and are subject to death as the consequence of it, not merely temporal, but eternal death. All mankind have guilt imputed to them in Adam; and by the evil of the nature

they derive from him, can do nothing to merit the favour of God, but only such things as deserve his wrath and condemnation. He entirely acquiesced with the psalmist in his exclamation:—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Hence he saw the necessity of being regenerated by the Spirit of God,—of being renewed in the image of Him that created us, before we can see, enjoy, or enter into the kingdom of God. He did not trouble himself with the metaphysical difficulties which have been started respecting the freedom, or the bondage of the human will: he knew by experience that his natural will inclined only to evil; and that to make his will coincide in any degree with the will of God, he must be influenced from on high: hence he drew the important doctrine of the Holy Spirit's influence on the hearts of the faithful in Christ Jesus, and also their election of God. Conversing on this topic a short time before his death, he said to his medical friend, "I am myself a proof and a witness of the doctrine of election: had not God dealt with me in the mysterious way he has, I should never,

never, have sought or inquired after him. He has led me by his own hand in a way which I never knew, and brought me into the way everlasting: I love him because he first loved me."

IV.—He had also clear views of, and belief in a covenant of grace. He considered that God had made a covenant with Adam in paradise, whereby happiness and endless life were rendered dependent on his obedience to the only law which was imposed: this law having been violated, all his posterity became involved in the penalties it contained:—"By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation"—"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Rom. v. 18, 19.

Hence the new covenant, established on better promises, which God made with Christ, the Second Adam, in behalf of the fallen race of man. "I have made a covenant with my chosen." Psa. lxxxix. 3. "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." Heb. xii. 24. "The covenant in Christ." Gal. iii. 17. In this covenant the conditions are, perfect obedience to a new law, which obedience was secured in the Divine Person of Jesus, who willingly came forward to fulfil the

designs of his heavenly Father: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psa. xl. 7, 8. This law he perfectly kept; he magnified it, and made it honourable; and not only so, but by his precious blood-shedding on the cross, he made an atonement and satisfaction to God for the sins of the whole world. Hence in the covenant were secured to him an innumerable multitude of faithful followers out of every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue, who should by him be constituted righteous, and through him have right to the tree of life. There could be no failure in this covenant, it being "ordered in all things and sure." All given to Christ, to seek and believe in him in life, must be with him in his glorious kingdom after death: "All that the Father hath given to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John vi. 37.

In this covenant, also, the work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of the elect is also secured: it is engaged that he shall abide with the church for ever, and lead its members into all truth. Hence in the experience of Mr. Buchanan, he

felt the value of this covenant, having for its object the glory of God, the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of immortal souls, and being in its very nature perfect. He could say with St. Paul in beholding it in its gracious and comprehensive effects, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 3—7.

Lastly.—He was fully persuaded, that, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The believer he knew to be formed after the image of Him that created him, and therefore constrained to holy obedience. The old nature, which is corrupt according to the sinful lusts,

is not indeed done away till death, when the body of sin is destroyed; but the new nature, which is imparted to, and engrafted in believers, by the Holy Spirit, enables them to mortify the deeds of the body, and to walk in the Spirit. He considered them, according to St. Paul's declaration, as "God's workmanship; created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them." Indeed he felt convinced that a necessity is laid upon the real christian to walk in the steps of his blessed Master, and so to let his "light shine before men, that they seeing his good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven."

From the foregoing statement it will be seen how great a change had taken place in Mr. Buchanan's views. During the season of his affliction, he had been enabled by Divine grace to reject his former pernicious principles, to receive, and believe, and rejoice in the revelation which God hath given of his Son Jesus Christ. Once a sceptic, now he became a follower of Him who "was despised and rejected of men;" once avoiding and hating the light,

now he desired it to shine more and more upon his soul; so that he differed from no one so much as from his former self, and desired to resemble no one so nearly as Jesus, his Saviour and Redeemer.

CHAPTER IX.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION UPON HIS HEART AND CONDUCT.

An intelligent mind, inquiring after divine truth, will sometimes more rapidly increase in knowledge than the heart will in heavenly affections. But in religion, the truth, or such a portion of it as is known and received, will always evidence itself in corresponding effects. For instance, if a man be really convinced of sin, and of its consequences, he will be alarmed and distressed, and will cry out, as the jailor did of old, "What shall I do to be saved?" The effect of this conviction will be his seeking after the Saviour.

Again, let a person from a knowledge of Christ's salvation, be brought to believe that he is accepted and pardoned of God, and there will arise in his mind joy and peace, gratitude and love.

In this way divine truth becomes experimental and influential on the heart and life of the recipient; and according to its nature so will be the conduct resulting from it, as a tree is known by the fruit it bears.

Indeed our knowledge only becomes saving in proportion as it is thus influential: if it be unproductive, it is vain and puffed up; but if it be instrumental in exciting us to please God, then it evinces its origin and nature to be Divine. Hence St. James says, "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" James ii. 20—22. It is evident that faith to be genuine must be operative: for of what use is it to a sinner to know his condition, to believe that God has sent his Son into the world to save the world, unless his faith bring him to Christ? The truth therefore to make us free must be alive within us,—must sanctify us: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." This will enable us to understand the apostle's beautiful

remarks in 1 Cor. xiii. "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

These few observations will account for the writer's extreme anxiety respecting his afflicted friend, lest there should be any discrepancy between his knowledge and its essential influence upon his conduct: and the more so, as it is not from transient impulses, but from the general tenor of a religious profession, that our estimate of its soundness must be formed. This anxiety was however soon removed from his mind, and he had the great happiness of beholding the genuine and abiding evidences of conversion unto God. It is with the deepest gratitude and satisfaction he reviews the last six months that his friend sojourned in this vale of tears. The important truths before inculcated displayed their efficacy in a manner exceedingly gratifying: this will appear as we proceed.

It must here be remarked, that his trials were not by any means confined to his grievous bodily sufferings on the bed of languishing: he had many other sources of sorrow, and amongst these opposition and ridicule from his former acquaintance: thus proving that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Few things are perhaps more difficult than, under such provocations, for a christian in patience to possess his soul. Hence we meet with numerous exhortations on this head in the Bible, such as: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." This difficulty, owing to various causes, is much greater in some than in others; but as regards the subject of this memoir, his conduct was different under provocation from what it would have been formerly, and was such as became a follower of Jesus: instead of returning railing for railing, he strove to subdue the evil arising in his own heart, and prayed earnestly for those who despitefully used him, and persecuted him.

Some circumstances of a peculiarly aggravating nature occurred about this time (May 1825)

which, a few months ago, would have aroused all his indignation; but now, to the surprise of most, his temper was serene: he followed the example of his Divine Master, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Indeed during the whole of the subsequent summer, the religion of Jesus displayed in him its benign and blessed influence: he became kind and affectionate towards those around him, grateful for the smallest attentions, and interested in their welfare. Often did he speak to his friend of his sister's unremitting kindness and tender care, and was deeply solicitous that she, witnessing his afflictions, and knowing the change in his views, might be brought to be a partaker with him of the glory to be revealed.

At this time, in addition to his other complaints, he became afflicted with diarrhœa, which baffled the effort of medicine to relieve it, and continued to the very last. It was however at one period so much restrained that it seemed probable it would be entirely subdued, and hopes were even entertained of the recovery of his general health;

but these hopes were fallacious, and God was gradually leading him to the close of his mortal career; yet, though his outward man was perishing, his inward man was renewed day by day.

His disposition now was remarkable for its mildness and gentleness, whereas formerly these qualities were rarely exercised; and having tasted that the Lord is gracious, it is impossible to describe how earnestly he longed for the spiritual welfare of others, especially of his own family. How constantly and ardently did he beseech his father, his mother, his sisters, his brother, to seek salvation in Jesus Christ; and how fervently he prayed that they might be adopted into the family of God! He left it as a dying request, that his friend would never cease to pray for them, and in particular he begged him not to forget his brother who was then in the West Indies. Often did he wish to see him before he died, that he might prove to him the evil tendency of his former principles, and that nothing but religion can sustain us, or make us really happy in the prospect of death. May all these his requests be granted through the atoning

sacrifice and merits, and for the sake of Jesus Christ!

He entertained sanguine hopes that the benefit of his afflictions would not terminate in himself, but extend to those he left behind in this vale of tears, and that the same gracious power which had brought him out of darkness into light would also effect the same for them, and that thus they might meet again before the throne of God and of the Lamb, in that blessed world where sorrow and death are done away. His care and concern for his deeply-afflicted mother increased as the time of his departure drew nigh; and it was evident that he was often greatly distressed at the fatigue and pain she underwent on his account. He was also frequently heard to express unfeigned thankfulness to God for his afflictions, since he had been pleased to make them the means of bringing him to know "the peace which passeth all understanding," and had sanctified them by his Spirit. He considered them but light in comparison with the eternal weight of glory reserved for the righteous; and as nothing compared with the sufferings of his Saviour, saying, "What did he not endure for

me, when he bore my sins in his own body on the tree?" His dependence on Christ for all things became more exclusive, and he experienced the force of the prophet's declaration, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

The union of Christ as the Head of the church, with all its members, was to him now a subject of great interest; and generally speaking during the whole of the summer, which was to be his last, he appeared in a truly spiritual, heavenly frame of mind: prayer and praise were become the very life of his soul; and he had begun "to desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

His strength, and all attempts to restore it, continually failing, he perceived that his end could not be far distant; and with no small delight did he anticipate his dismissal.

The author of this memoir frequently left him in the evening hoping for, and ardently desirous to enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. The enjoyment granted them as they conversed together on divine things,

and on the glories of the eternal world, where they hoped again to meet in the presence of the Saviour, was such that he trusts the remembrance of it will never be effaced from his mind; there seemed in it more of heaven than of earth.

On Sunday, the 14th of August, he was so ill that he expected very soon to finish his mortal journey. In the evening his medical friend called, when a very interesting conversation ensued, in which the joy and peace of his soul were affectingly depicted; and which resembled the calmness and serenity of the day about to close. After expressing his sense of the goodness of God in leading him by a right way through the wilderness of this present evil world, he said that death, the king of terrors, was near at hand, but that he would not on that account exchange his state and prospects for all that the world could give. He exclaimed, "Were all the riches, honours, distinctions, and wealth that could be given or enjoyed in this life, combined with health, offered to me, I should prefer my present dying state, and the prospect before me of joys at God's right hand, and the glory soon, I trust, to be revealed."

He had been for some time laid upon a mattress that was so constructed as to be moveable to different parts of the room: this evening he requested it might be placed near the window, that he might once more behold the glorious setting sun, and take, as he thought, probably a last farewell of that wonderful work of God, which had always excited in him feelings of awe and admiration. He saw it indeed, but with feelings far different from those with which he had been wont to behold it. He could now look on that glorious orb, and say, "The God who made it is my Father and Friend, my Saviour and Redeemer: soon shall I behold his glory in his eternal kingdom, in a world of light and love!" As he conjectured, this was his last look on the setting sun, which exhibited a striking emblem of his state; but he was not insensible to its beauty and majesty: "No pencil," he exclaimed, "can ever portray such richness, such splendour, such glory." His love of the works of God in creation seemed to revive with sudden force, and to give a wonderful animation to the expression of his countenance, and to the few sentences which at different intervals he uttered.

From the window near which he was placed to behold the setting sun he saw also a small portion—a corner—of the church-yard: after regarding it with a calm but deep emotion for some time, he said to those standing near him, "I must soon die: when I am dead, let me be buried in that peaceful spot." It need not be added that his request, at the proper time, was complied with; and that there his mortal remains rest till the morning of the resurrection, when that which was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption.

The writer of this memoir happened to call soon after the departure of his medical friend, and found him in a delightfully calm and heavenly frame of mind. He mentioned his persuasion that he must soon die, and after some interesting conversation, requested he would offer up a prayer for him at the throne of grace; "and," said he, "pray that God, if it be his will, would grant me an easy death, and that my intellectual faculties may be spared me to the last."

CHAPTER X.

HIS DEATH.

We left Mr. Buchanan, in our last chapter, in anticipation of a speedy removal from time to eternity; but it pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to order it otherwise, and to prolong his pilgrimage six weeks, during which period he was in constant expectation of the summons to depart.

Some persons may perhaps imagine that this season was necessarily one of dreariness and gloom: for what can be more dismal than to live in the hourly apprehension of death? This however was by no means the case. Since his conversion—from the time he became a new creature in Christ Jesus, death ceased to be the king of terrors; death was now "no more the limit, but the gate of life." He regarded the hour of his departure hence as that when sorrow

and death would for ever be done away, and when he should take possession of the "inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved in heaven for him." He always spoke of death as a release, as the messenger of immortality. So much was he impressed with this good hope through grace, that when his medical friend said to him, "I think you will survive to-day:" or, "you will most probably even survive to-morrow,"—instead of feeling he had obtained a temporary reprieve, his countenance would fall, and he would express how great was his disappointment. When greatly oppressed with languor and pain, and consequently affected in mind by its mysterious union with the body, his friend has often effectually cheered him by repeating the verse—

"Though painful at present,
'Twill cease before long;
And then, oh! how pleasant
The conqueror's song!"

Some persons may ask, How was he assured of salvation? Did he esteem himself good enough to merit the favour of God, and to claim eternal life? An answer to these questions has,

the writer conceives, been already given in this memoir. It is true, he felt love to God, hatred of sin, desires after holiness, repentance, &c. &c.; and these were satisfactory evidences to others of his safety, but not unto himself: a sense of his vileness and unworthiness before God destroyed all hopes founded on his own goodness. His language was—

> "A guilty, weak, and worthless worm,
> On thy kind arms I fall:
> Be thou my strength and righteousness,
> My Saviour and my all!"

Neither did his happy state of mind arise from the review of a life well spent; nor from moral observances; but from a conviction that Christ died for him; that his sins were forgiven; that he was an adopted child of God, and that he, the faithful God, would never abandon his child to destruction. These and similar views of divine truth, personally applied through the influence of the Holy Spirit, cheered him in the dark valley of the shadow of death, and divested his soul of fear: in that valley his Saviour, the Shepherd of Israel was with him; and his rod and staff comforted him.

It must not, however, be supposed that he was always in the same happy, assured state of mind: there were even now fluctuations in his views and feelings: personal assurance was not always vouchsafed, and his body of death impeded the holy desires of his heart. The writer remembers finding him one morning somewhat dejected, and grieving that God had hid his face from him: indeed so much was he affected that, when he mentioned this, he burst into tears. But the cloud was not long to be interposed between his soul and the God of his salvation, in whom he trusted: his hope and confidence soon returned.

It may here be mentioned, that he viewed his own state after his conversion, always with a godly jealousy, and was anxious not to deceive himself; and when, after much examination, he found his hope was founded on Christ, he would say, "How can I doubt the word of God! He has said, that none shall perish who believe in Jesus, but they shall be saved to the uttermost: this is the true testimony of God; I receive it, and embrace it as his truth."

About this time his mind was a good deal

impressed with the importance and necessity of receiving the Lord's Supper. He had never yet been a communicant, and he was even now prevented by a somewhat violent increase of sickness from enjoying that privilege. His views on the subject were clear and satisfactory; for he did not, as too many do, consider that ordinance as a passport to heaven, but as a means of grace, whereby the soul is assisted in its heavenly desires and affections; whereby a more sensible union with Christ is obtained, and a broader and deeper stream of Divine love is poured in upon the soul.

Soon after this he sent for the writer, and gave him all necessary directions respecting the last offices that were to be performed for him; requesting him to discharge his debts, which were but few and small, for which he gave him the amount in money, and desired that the following lines should be engraved upon his tomb stone:—

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

The composure of his mind in the constant expectation of death was very great: the following circumstance will illustrate this remark.

One night, attended only by the servants, his mother having gone to bed to restore if possible her exhausted strength, he grew suddenly much worse; a faintness came over him, which made him think he was dying: he addressed the servants, and begged that they would on no account disturb her, but instantly call the writer, and, if he should die before he came, request him at the proper time to inform his mother of the event. All his anxiety was for her: for himself he had no fears, the sting of death was taken away. But the time of his departure was not then come.

He had requested his friend to be with him, if possible, when he breathed his last, and that he would allow nothing external to disturb him in that solemn hour: in consequence of this request, the writer frequently sat by his bed-side in long silence, expecting continually to behold the last conflict, and to see his eyes close in death.

At every opportunity, when exemption from

pain allowed him, he addressed those around him on the value of their souls, and the preciousness of Christ's salvation, exhorting them to seek him whilst he might be found, and call upon him whilst he was near. He felt much concern for the spiritual welfare of the servant who attended him, spoke to her as a dying man of her immortal interests, of the need of conversion, and the love of God in Christ to repenting sinners: he left also a request with the writer, that he would, after his death, give her a Bible, hoping she would follow its directions, and be brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

The slow approach of death was exceedingly trying to him: he wished to depart, and to be with Christ. Sometimes he longed almost impatiently for the hour that was to witness the separation of his immortal soul from his mortal body; but he was, nevertheless, patient; he had learned to be resigned to his Maker's will. To the writer of this memoir he said one morning, "Never, under any circumstance, wish to die before the period God assigns you: you know not his purpose in prolonging, or in shortening your days. I feel I have been impatient, but

God's time is the best: last night he gave me such a blessed view of Christ as I never had before."

About the same period he said, referring to the time when he was studying for college, "How conceited and ignorant I then was! I could without any difficulty read the Greek Testament, but I did not understand it; I was ignorant of its spiritual meaning; but now I see and feel its sacred truths; and oh! how different does the Bible now appear to me! It is all true, it is all true!" This he spoke with strong emphasis; and thus bore a dying testimony to the truth of the word of God.

Saturday, September 3, 1825. The whole of this day he was in a calm and happy frame of mind. He felt, he said, as happy as it was possible to be in this world: he had spent the preceding night in much and sweet communion with God.

Among other remarks which he made to his friend, he said, "You know I have often complained of finding prayer a difficult, and sometimes a dead performance, but last night I could not cease from prayer; and the petitions I offered

up were not for myself only, but for all, for my friends, for mine enemies, for those who may have injured me: I have been praying for their salvation, and that God would forgive them any wrong they may have intended against me. Oh that this prayer may be heard! There are some persons whose names a few weeks ago I could hardly hear mentioned with patience, but now I can regard them with complacency, and pray for them from my heart. Surely this night I experienced the force of the psalmist's expression, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him:'" then turning his head towards the writer of this memoir, he said, "And I have, my friend, been praying for you, that you may have a happy end: a happier than mine I could not wish you."

September 5. He was this day extremely ill; his bodily infirmities evidently affected the state of his mind, which was not without a tendency to despond. On being asked as to the foundation of his hope, he replied, "My hope is founded on a rock, the Rock of ages: it is not, I trust, presumption in me to believe it is so; but, answer me, Peter was presumptuous, do I

resemble him?" The writer answered, "Peter was presumptuous in trusting to his own strength; but it was not presumption, but faith, which enabled him to rest in the merits and sufferings of his Saviour for justification unto life. In like manner we cannot trust in Jesus too much, it is presumption to trust in any one but him." He then requested him to offer up a prayer, and, in doing so, to ask of God, if it was his will, that he might speedily be released; adding, that he desired not to go one moment before the period when it should seem good to him to call him hence.

Sunday, September 25. He was now evidently advancing fast towards the consummation of his wishes. He suffered this day great bodily pain and exhaustion. The writer found him lying on his face, and uttering half-suppressed moans. He was also probably, owing to his weak and painful state of body and the effect of opiates, at times somewhat delirious. He said, as the writer approached his bed-side, "I am almost over the river, but Satan is doing all he can to hinder me from reaching the happy shore, but he knows I soon shall be far beyond his

reach." He spoke much to the same effect; and at length became perfectly calm and collected, and expressed an earnest desire that the gospel should be made known in every land, and that all flesh should see the salvation of God.

The next day he sent for the writer a little before noon, who, when he arrived, found him in a calm and happy frame of mind: his understanding was perfectly unclouded; indeed his intellectual powers appeared in unusual vigour. He said that being collected in his thoughts, and joyful in spirit, he had sent for his friend, that he might once more have the pleasure of his society, and converse with him on the great subject of a believer's hope, as soon his hope, he trusted, would be lost in the glorious certainty of the joys of heaven: he added, after a pause, "Satan has again assailed me, but it was the last time."

This was indeed almost the last time the writer and his friend met together in this world: the conversation therefore that took place between them on this occasion is narrated nearly word for word, as it shows what were his views and feelings, while standing on the verge of eternity.

"I feel," he said, "quite happy. Oh how unworthy I am! would I could be more humbled under a sense of my unworthiness! but God is the faithful God: his faithfulness reacheth unto the heavens: he never changes, and therefore we are not consumed. 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' What wonderful language is this from the Creator to the creature, from a holy God to sinful man!" His friend here repeated the following verse of a beautiful hymn—

> "This God is the God we adore;
> Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,
> Whose love is as great as his power,
> And neither knows measure nor end."

To which he replied, "These are sweet lines; I think I never heard them before; but where is the poem containing the following lines?

> 'His love a sea immensely wide,
> His grace an overflowing tide.'

Oh, it is all true, it is all true! Would that I

could love this Saviour more than I do! He cannot be loved too much." "Shortly," said his friend, "when you see him as he is, you will praise and love him as you ought." To this he made no direct answer; but continued to pursue the train of thought to which he had before given utterance: "Oh what love, that the Father should have sought me out, and drawn me to himself! otherwise I must have perished in my guilt and unbelief: I cannot also describe to you the great happiness and support I derive in considering God as the THREE IN ONE: from each of the persons of the Divine Trinity I receive endless blessings; the Father draws me, the Son redeems and intercedes for me, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies me and leads me into all truth; thus

> "A faithful and unchanging God
> Lays the foundation of my hope
> In oaths, and promises, and blood.'"

"Surely," said his friend, "surely you now feel the force of the psalmist's expression, 'My heart and my flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!'"

Repeating the last words, he replied, "I do indeed find that he is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever! I shall now, before many hours have passed, go into eternity; I know it cannot be long before I depart, but I would not be impatient to be gone: his time be mine, whether it be at the second watch, or whether it be at the third watch."

After speaking, as his strength permitted him, for some time in a similar manner, he desired his friend to pray with him. This request he made, supposing it would be the last time they would unite in Divine worship in this world, and hoping they should in God's appointed hour, be together associated with angels and archangels, and the spirits of the just made perfect in Christ Jesus, in singing before the throne of God, the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

Before Mr. S. took his departure, Mr. Buchanan's mother entered the room, weeping much as she beheld her suffering son, and saying that the sight was more afflictive than she could bear; to which Mr. S. replied, "Can we weep, while we see at the same time his

consolations in Jesus more abounding than his sufferings?" With a feeble voice, but with much emphasis, he exclaimed, "Far more—infinitely more!"

At three o'clock he was taken worse, and sent for his mother, and said to her with great feeling, "Dear mother, I am dying—all is well—I am happy—tell Mr. S.—tell every one how happy I am: THERE IS REALITY IN RELIGION."

His friend saw him again at nine o'clock; he was then unable to speak much, and seemed disposed to sleep; at twelve o'clock he was evidently dying, and about three hours after was thought by those present with him to have been summoned into the eternal world, when to their surprise he exclaimed distinctly, "Send for Mr. S."

When the writer came into the room, and had for a few moments looked upon the interesting countenance of his friend, and inquired whether he knew him, he said, "Yes—my friend Shepherd." On being asked whether he suffered much pain, he replied, being now scarcely able to articulate, "No!——Heaven——Heaven!"

These were his last words. A few minutes afterwards he breathed his last at four o'clock in the morning of Tuesday the 27th day of September, being then within a month of six and twenty years of age.

THE END.

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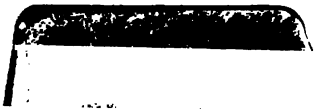

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